

R. Rm.

BY

1670

.N548D26

1882

HISTORY  
OF THE  
METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
IN  
NEWPORT. R.I.  
—  
DAVIS  
—

288 11  
✓  
|  
the LIBRARY

|  
GARRETT  
THEOLOGICAL  
SEMINARY  
|

evanston, illinois  
|







E. Warner



# HISTORY

OF THE

## Methodist Episcopal Church,

IN

NEWPORT, R. I.

---

By LUCIUS D. DAVIS.

---

NEWPORT, R. I. :  
DAVIS & PITMAN.  
1882.



CARRETT BIBLICAL INSTITUTE  
EVANSTON, ILLINOIS.

ORREW THEOLOGICAL  
SEMINARY LIBRARY.



SEP 17 1913

RRm  
 BY 1670  
 N548D26  
 1882

From Exchange

In preparing and committing to the press the following pages it has been the purpose of the writer to gather the fragmentary records of the past and present them in a permanent form. Methodism in Newport, in its rise and progress, has not been devoid of interest even to those not connected with that branch of the universal church. This little book has been prepared amid the pressure of many other duties and is not as full a presentation of the facts as the merits of the case deserve. But it may be of some service to the future historian as well as of interest to the readers of today. With this hope it is respectfully submitted to the public.

NEWPORT, July 20, 1882.

30479



Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2024

## I.

### ENGLISH MISSIONARIES TO AMERICA.

---

IT would be difficult to name the precise period when Methodism, the great religious revival of the 18th century, was inaugurated in America. John and Charles Wesley came as missionaries to Georgia in 1735 and labored for a short period but with no marked degree of success. Charles Wesley visited New England in 1736 and preached in King's Chapel, the English church of Boston, whence he returned to England. John Wesley went back about fifteen months later. Neither of these men was then personally prepared for the work before him.

George Whitefield came in 1738, the ship which bore him hither passing that which carried Wesley back, though neither of them, at the time, was aware of the fact.

Unlike his predecessors Whitefield met with a perfect ovation. Vast crowds everywhere greeted him and thousands were quickened into newness of life under his labors. He visited Newport Sept. 14, 1740, and as he proceeded towards Boston, preaching in the several towns, his fame went before him, and when within ten miles of that city the Governor, chief clergy and great numbers of citizens met him and escorted him on his way. He labored there some time and preached his farewell discourse under the famous old elm in Boston Common to a congregation of twenty thousand people.

In the meantime the Wesleys were at home struggling for a new and better life and gathering around them numerous kindred spirits. These were organized into societies in the established church, no one entertaining the thought of antagonism or separation. Had the parent body properly estimated the work as of God, and fostered it, no greater blessing could have come to that church or to the English people.

Wesley never again visited America



though no man of his or any other time has exerted so wide and permanent an influence upon its religious life. Whitefield crossed the Atlantic thirteen times on his missionary tours, and in addition to his revival work laid the foundations of both Princeton and Dartmouth colleges, as well as of his famous orphan school in the South.

As the remarkable work under the Wesleys went on in England with ever increasing success, and as there was a steady tide of emigration from the old world to the new, it was impossible that the stirring scenes in the fatherland should not be to some extent re-enacted on this side the Atlantic. In response to calls from those who had emigrated and who were largely destitute of religious privileges here, Mr. Wesley first sent Richard Boardman and Joseph Pillmore, two of his preachers, to take charge of the American work. They arrived in 1769 and Mr. Boardman at once joined the little band that had been already organized in New York by Philip Embury and Barbara Heck, while Mr. Pillmore proceeded to Philadelphia and superintended the work in that city.

In 1771, Francis Asbury and Richard Wright came over to their help, and Mr. Asbury afterward became the first resident bishop in America. No man ever more fully or more fitly filled that office. For many years he labored as the apostle of the infant church, visiting by turns the cities on the seaboard, the scattered towns inland and the distant settlements on the frontier, preaching everywhere, organizing societies, confirming the souls of believers and laying the sure and broad foundations of the church which has since grown to such magnificent proportions.

The first Conference was held in 1773 when the total number of members was reported as 2,073. The societies in America were organized in connection with those in the old country, and were, to some extent, in their opinions and customs in allegiance to the church of England from which Wesley and his coadjutors never separated. But when the American colonies had won their independence it was evident that a separation in church relations must also follow. Hence with the

consent of all parties the Methodist Episcopal Church was organized as an independent body in 1784. The Protestant Episcopal Church followed and became independent of the mother church, for the same reason, in 1789, five years later.

At the Conference of 1784 the total number of members was 13,740. But in the appointments of that year no preacher is named for New England as the work was thus far confined to the Middle states and the South which, as apparently more needy fields, were first visited.



## II.

### THE PIONEER ITINERANTS IN NEW ENGLAND.

---

**I**T was not in the nature of things that this section of the country should much longer be omitted from the field of operations. Among the most eloquent and able preachers of the new order was Jesse Lee. He was a native of Virginia, and had been converted under the labors of Rev. Mr. Jarret of the Protestant Episcopal Church. When but 16 years old he joined the Methodist society, and at an early age entered the ministry. In 1775 he began to think and talk of New England and asked Bishop Asbury to allow him to come hither and open his mission to this people. But it was not until 1789 that his request was granted. At the Conference held in New York that year he was appointed to Stamford circuit which was located in New



England and had no other boundaries. On his arrival in Connecticut he found himself confronted with strong prejudices against both his methods and his theology. The churches were cold and formal and were fast lapsing from the faith of their fathers. They needed just the life that early Methodism had to impart but were not prepared to receive it.

Jesse Lee opened his mission in Norwalk where he preached his first sermon. He continued his labors and became the founder of the church in New England, which proved the hardest soil that the early itinerants had yet sought to cultivate. He visited Rhode Island the same year and on the 3d day of September preached at a coffee house kept by a Mr. Cranston, in Charlestown, Washington county. He speaks in his journal as receiving a cordial reception, quite unlike that afforded in Connecticut and afterwards in Massachusetts, and praises the liberality of those Baptists whom he met, who gave him much encouragement. Still he gathered but little fruit. At the end of seven months he had

formed but two classes, one consisting of three women and two men, and the other of a woman and a man.

It was not until the next year that Lee visited Boston where he found little favor and where it was evident he was not wanted. No church would open its doors to him, and no householder would offer his parlor, or even his kitchen for a service. But Jesse Lee was not to be repelled by such indifference. He went out unheralded upon the Common, and standing on a table under the spreading branches of the same old elm where Whitefield preached to 20,000 people, began to sing a hymn. At first four persons stopped to listen. At the conclusion of the hymn the preacher kneeled on the table when he offered a fervent prayer, and at its conclusion the number of hearers had increased to more than a hundred. Another hymn was sung and by this time the people were seen coming from all directions to the spot. Mr. Lee then took his text and preached an earnest and able sermon quite in contrast, in its form and manner, to the ordi-

nary discourses of the times ; and when he was through the benediction was pronounced upon a congregation estimated at three thousand. The people treated him respectfully and offered no opposition, but were evidently in doubt as to what it all meant. Not one of them tendered him food or shelter, or even spoke to him to inquire whence he came or whither he went. When the service was concluded they all turned away and proceeded to their homes, leaving the stranger solitary and alone. Weary and hungry he mounted his horse, for there were no railroads then, and rode to Lynn, where was a man whom he had met in the South and who now gave him a hearty welcome.

This was the first Methodist sermon, proper, preached in Boston. Most men would have been discouraged by such a reception, and by his want of success in other sections. But Lee was not. He had a purpose and a mission. Whitefield preached with great power and left the pastors already in the field to gather up the fruit. He was the representative of no

church and was withal a Calvinist in harmony with the prevailing faith. Jesse Lee was the representative of a church recently established in the country and with a widely differing theology. His coming, therefore, was looked upon with doubt and suspicion, and not without show of reason.

It was at about this time when Lee wrote in his journal, "Glory be to God that I begin to see *some fruit* of my labor in this barren part of the world." That fruit consisted so far as can now be seen of the seven members that had been, as already described, gathered into society relations.

During this same year, 1790, Jesse Lee again visited Rhode Island and preached his first sermon in Newport on the 30th day of June, as is believed, in the church on Division street. He came again several times during the year and preached also in most of the towns on Narragansett Bay. Of his first visit to Newport he makes this record:—

"We stayed two nights at our kind friend's, Brother Green, a New Light Baptist. I lectured the second night from



Isaiah 64, 1-7. There was some life among the people although it was late, and the congregation was like our Lord's disciples before the Passover. There is also a Jew's synagogue and a Moravian chapel here. I expect before many years the Methodists will have a house of worship."

This prophecy was fulfilled much sooner, we judge, than its author expected. Newport was included at first in what was called Greenwich circuit and afterward in Warren circuit, which was formed in 1794 and took in Warren, Providence, Newport, Cranston and other towns. The first Methodist house of worship in the state was built in Warren and was dedicated September 24, 1794. The present edifice is the third one that has been erected by the enterprising society in that town.

In the year 1800 Joshua Hall was appointed to Rhode Island and he records that he visited Newport, "preached four times by daylight and had a meeting again in the evening." And he adds, "this was the hardest day's work I ever performed before or since, but it was delightful."

Although Jesse Lee and those who came after him escaped persecution in Rhode Island, thanks to the doctrine of "soul liberty" as taught by Roger Williams and accepted by all the people, they met with but little encouragement. When the zealous pioneer of our faith came in 1794 he says:—

"I rode to Coventry in Rhode Island and being directed to call on Colonel B. I rode up to his door about sunset, spoke with him and asked him if he had not entertained Methodist preachers sometimes. To which he replied, 'I have sometimes.' 'Would you,' said I, 'be willing to entertain another?' He said, 'I would full *as lief* if it suited them as well that they would go along.' 'Well then,' I told him, 'I will *go along*.' So I rode on and got in a blind path by dark, and then for the greater part of the way could not see the path at all, and very often could not see my horse's head. However, I arrived at General Lippitt's in Cranston a little after they had gone to bed which was about ten o'clock."

General Lippitt, referred to here, was a

conspicuous personage in the early Methodism of the state. He was a man of large wealth for those times, an intimate friend of General Greene of Revolutionary fame and in all respects one of the foremost men in the state. His wife and daughter were first converted and became members of the society and their house was long the welcome home of all the weary itinerants who passed that way. The General himself soon came in and was a life-long and ardent supporter of the church. It is said that he kept fifteen spare beds in his spacious and hospitable mansion and sometimes on quarterly meeting occasions afforded entertainment to not less than fifty guests. He was a class leader, steward and trustee and at his own cost built a chapel on his estate where Lee and others of his time often officiated. The ruins of the chapel still appear though the growth of neighboring villages has made those places the centres of worship as well as of population.

When Lee left Newport to travel northward Mr. Nathaniel Gladding of Bristol, who had heard of the new comer, resolved

if possible to induce him to preach in that village. He kept watch for the approach of the itinerant, who must cross at Bristol Ferry, and when he appeared accosted him, begging that he would stop and address her people, which he did. This was the foundation of the large and flourishing church in that town. Mr. Gladding, who thus acted the part of pioneer, was the grandfather of William O. Gladding, now a member of the Newport church.





### III.

## THE SOCIETY ORGANIZED AND ITS FIRST MINISTERS.

---

THESE repeated visits to Newport bore fruit and Joshua Hall organized the first society, which probably included also Portsmouth, and which was the beginning of the present church. This was just eighty-two years ago. The class was a small one and but little is known of its immediate history, for the preacher soon passed on to New Bedford, and then pushed forward to other fields, like a flaming light in a shadowy land. Mr. Hall likewise organized a class in Providence at about the same time. We have no further record of his personal history, except that he located the next year, as did most of our early ministers after brief terms of successful labor.

It cannot now be determined whether the

♦

first organization in Newport was permanent, or whether the small class then formed died out after a feeble and short-lived existence. It is more than probable, however, that it continued in being in connection with the large circuits of those days and that Newport received the occasional visits of those itinerants who traversed the country and everywhere preached the word of life.

In 1803 Thomas Lyel, who was stationed in Boston, was appointed to Newport for two months, George Pickering being the presiding elder.

In 1805 Reuben Hubbard and Peter Jayne, then stationed at Boston, visited Newport and preached in the First Baptist Church, Rev. Michael Eddy pastor, and the next year the town was made a regular appointment with Mr. Hubbard as preacher-in-charge.

The people of this day can scarcely realize the difficulties attending the labors of those early itinerants. Take for instance the visits of Thomas Lyel, Enoch Mudge, George Pickering and others who came

here regularly on these errands of mercy. Starting out from Boston or Lynn they travelled on horseback, usually to Providence and along the west shore of the bay to Warwick where they were obliged to take a sailboat and cross over to Newport. Their work done they recrossed in the same way and went on their journeys.

It was therefore a great thing for Newport, thus isolated, to have a minister residing on the island. Upon Mr. Hubbard's arrival he again preached in the First Baptist Church, when application was made for the use of the Seventh Day Baptist Church which was not used on Sundays. For some reason this request was refused. Permission was given to use the Senate chamber of the State House, and this becoming too small the congregation adjourned to the Assembly chamber where they continued to worship for some time. Thus our venerable State House has been a nursery of the gospel as well as of the law and politics.

The little band soon outgrew even the Assembly chamber and began to feel the

need of a house of worship ; but to build was a gigantic undertaking for those days and for a society of such limited numbers and means. It is a matter of regret that we are without the names of the members, but no records have been preserved.

In those days Methodist chapels were constructed in the plainest and cheapest possible manner. Our fathers often made a virtue of necessity and built according to their limited means ; and many of them took great pleasure in decrying pews, bells, steeples, choirs and organs. The early itinerants preached in groves, in private houses, in barns, by the wayside, anywhere and everywhere that congregations could be gathered. They constituted the light brigade of the Christian army and moved from place to place with astonishing celerity. Such men as Francis Asbury, Jesse Lee, George Pickering, Freeborn Garrettson, Elijah Hedding and their associates made the whole country vocal with their songs of praise and shouts of victory. In tracing their history we find them alike at home on the southern plantation surrounded with

vast crowds of whites and blacks; in the city with such as turned aside from the marts of business; in the New England schoolhouse with its score of cold and calculating critics; and in the log cabin of the frontiersman face to face with the rougher elements of society. Their zeal for God and for souls knew no bounds. They feared no opposition and quailed not at fatigue or danger. Though there were no public means of travel, these pioneers climbed the loftiest mountain ranges, swam the widest and swiftest rivers and penetrated the most dense and almost trackless forests in the performance of the work. No settlement was too distant, no community too obscure, to escape their notice. They encountered opposition, were often persecuted, were not unfrequently pelted with stones, were arrested and brought before magistrates and were ridiculed as unlettered and ignorant pretenders, but none of these things moved them. Amid it all they told the story of the cross, cried aloud that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners and that in the divine administration there

is no respect of persons. They were so fully impressed with the importance of their work and the divinity of their mission as to appear to many of their hearers as enthusiasts and zealots, but the results have long since shown that they were men of large executive and administrative powers as well as of pulpit ability.





#### IV.

### THE CORPORATORS AND THEIR WORK.

---

**A**N act of incorporation was procured in 1807. The incorporators were twenty-three in number, as follows:—Reuben Hubbard, James Perry, Joshua Appleby, John Hull, Joseph Boss, Jr., George Irish, Henry Moore, William Dennis, Lloyd Beale, William Moore, Jr., Benjamin Wightman, John Spooner, Albert W. Gardiner, John Pitman, Paul M. Mumford, Thomas H. Mumford, Jonathan Heath, Benjamin Pearce, George Cox, Isaac Sherman, Samuel E. Carr, John A. Shaw and Nicolas R. Gardiner.

Of these the first named was the pastor of the church who had come from Maryland as did so many of the early New England preachers. He returned south soon after leaving Newport and changed his relation from the Methodist Episcopal to the Protestant Episcopal Church.

Captain Lloyd Beale was an officer of the United States Army and was stationed in command of the force at Fort Walcott. Though a soldier in the service of his country he was also an earnest soldier for Christ. No man did more than he for the young and struggling church. He was afterward ordered south and we know nothing of his subsequent history.

John Hull outlived all the others having departed this life in the faith of the Gospel June 15, 1862, at a ripe old age. His daughter, Miss Sarah Hull, is the present owner of the pew which her father procured at the building of the edifice.

John Pitman was an uncle of William R. Pitman, one of our present stewards and a member of the board of trustees, and also of Benjamin Pitman of New Bedford, both well known through a wide circle of Methodism.

John A. Shaw afterward went south and became a Baptist preacher of some distinction.

Thomas H. Mumford was an elder brother of the late Benjamin Mumford, so

long known among us as a fast friend to the cause and an earnest and liberal supporter of its interests.

Isaac Sherman was the father of I. W. Sherman, of the Thames-street church, and of Miss Elizabeth Sherman, the president of our very active and efficient Woman's Foreign Missionary Society. He never became a member of the church, but his wife, Mrs. Elizabeth Sherman, joined in 1820 and continued in its communion until 1876 when at a little more than ninety-three years of age she passed peacefully to the church above. Her memory is one which the church delights to honor, and a memorial window is placed in the newly furnished auditorium in commemoration of her virtues. It is a fitting memento from the daughter who bears the mother's name and walks in her footsteps.

Henry Moore, Jr., was at one time a grain and flour merchant on Market Square. He never became a member of the church. His death occurred at sea and the ocean became his burial place.

George Irish was also a corporator who

never became a member of the society, but who was a staunch friend and a liberal supporter—a worthy prototype of many others who have aided by their counsels and their gifts. He was uncle to the late William C. Irish, and of Albert Irish now with us.

William Moore was a member of the New Light Baptist Church, so-called, on Division street, but always took a lively interest in this society. He was a dry goods merchant. He was the father of Mrs. Dr. Nathaniel Greene, of Portsmouth, and of Rev. Henry Moore, a well known clergyman of the Protestant Episcopal Church.

William Dennis was a sea captain and a prominent citizen, and with his family was usually identified with the Baptists. He was the grandfather of the late William L. Dennis, and of Mary Dennis, for many years one of our school teachers.

Joshua Appleby was a sea-faring man whose residence was on the Point among many others of that mode of life. He took a very active interest in affairs especially in the building of the house of worship a little

later. A street in the city now bears his name.

John Spooner is another who was not a member of the church. He was in the grocery business and his name has descended to many of Newport's present inhabitants.

Albert W. Gardiner was a carpet dealer and dry goods merchant at 108 Thames street. He was never a member of the church.

Paul M. Mumford was the son of Paul Mumford, chief justice of the Rhode Island Supreme Court, and was himself clerk of the Supreme Judicial Court of the town and county of Newport.

Nicholas R. Gardiner was not then a professor of religion but was converted under the labors of Samuel Merwin, the second pastor, and devoted a long and useful life to the church. He died in Warwick in 1852, aged eighty-two years. His son William became a travelling preacher in Maine and afterward located and settled in Providence, where he was actively connected with the Mathewson-street church, his daughter being the wife of Micah J.

Talbot, D. D., one of our later pastors. Another son, Thomas Jefferson Gardiner, also resided in Providence in connection with the same church. Both have died within a few years but a daughter, Mrs. Hannah Andrews, is in the same city aged nearly ninety years and is still in the service.

Benjamin Pearce was the father of the late George Pearce, of Bristol. He lived on the corner of Marlboro and Charles streets and had several other children who are now living.

Joseph Boss, Jr., has numerous descendants in the city, some of whom have long been connected with the church.

Samuel E. Carr was for many years clerk of the public market.

James Perry and Benjamin Wightman were leaders in the movement, as will be seen in the course of the next chapter.

George Cox was a marketman in active business and was the grandfather of Thomas E. Cox, one of our later Sunday school superintendents and for some time leader of the choir.

Jeremiah Heath was captain of a coasting



vessel plying mostly between Newport and New York. Though not himself becoming a member of the church several of his family have since been connected with the society. He was the grandfather of Henry A. Heath, whose place of business is on Thames street.

Such were some of the men who were first associated as the incorporators of the church and congregation. They were authorized by the charter to add to their number as many persons as they might choose, and those who came into the corporation were added by a vote of the existing members and might or might not be pew-holders. A different custom has grown up, but the charter remains in this respect the same.

Thus qualified to hold the property in accordance with the laws of the state the incorporators proposed as quickly as possible to build a house of worship. To find the means was no easy task but, while they hesitated, two men, neither of whom was a member of the church, assumed the responsibility and proceeded to build the present edifice at their own finan-

cial charge, trusting to the sale of pews to reimburse them for their outlay, and perhaps afford them a profit. It is said that they suffered considerable loss by the transaction, which the society was not able to make up to them. Their names were James Perry and Benjamin Wightman. Captain Perry lived many years among us and his daughter, Miss Phebe Perry, now eighty-five years of age, is still an honored member of this church. For a long time she was connected with the choir, and her voice is still occasionally heard in the sanctuary as the old tunes that fired men's hearts are yet sometimes sung. Mr. Wightman was a grocer on Market Square and is well remembered by a few of our older citizens. To their zeal and enterprise as business men the little band of worshippers was greatly indebted. Many others of the same class interested themselves in the new movement and some of the most prominent families in the town connected themselves with the organization and gave it their moral and financial support.

The first board of trustees, as fixed by the

charter, consisted of James Perry, Benjamin Wightman, Joshua Appleby, John Hull, Joseph Boss, Jr., George Irish and Benjamin Moore. The first meeting of the incorporators, the record of which has been preserved, was held in March, 1810, when Lloyd Beale presided as moderator and James Perry was elected steward. In 1811 W. G. Burroughs was chosen clerk, the following new members having been elected by formal vote:—John Thurston, John Cahoone, Benjamin Pitman, Jr., Joseph Lyon, George B. Pitman, Rouse T. Potter, Paul Bailey, Arnold Peckham, Peter P. Remington, Eben P. Sherman, W. G. Burroughs, Henry Bull, Benjamin Hall, George W. Cole, Solomon Townsend, Otis Chafee, Nicholas Taylor, Samuel Downs.

The next year Henry Bull was chosen moderator, which office he filled until 1816 when he was succeeded by William Moore. Peter P. Remington was the clerk.

## V.

### THE NEW HOUSE OF WORSHIP.

---

THE preliminary arrangements having been completed by the act of incorporation and the acceptance of the charter granted by the General Assembly, it now remained to push forward the work of building which had been already begun. As Captain Perry and Mr. Wightman took the matter chiefly in hand, the records contain but brief references to the progress of the work. In the Newport Mercury of August 15th, 1806, we find the following advertisement :—

Persons desirous of becoming subscribers for pews in the Methodist meeting house to be erected in this town will please apply to Mr. B. Wightman or Capt. J. Appleby who are authorized to collect subscribers. The building will be commenced in a few days on part of the estate, late Christopher Ellery's, Esq.

Associated with Captain Perry and Mr. Wightman was Mr. Benjamin Pitman who had charge of the work as master builder,

and who, it is said, with his own hands made the carved cornice around the ceilings and in other parts of the building. In renovating the church all of this ancient workmanship has been preserved that was possible.

The parties engaged in this work, it appears, attempted to raise money by a lottery to help along the enterprise. As is well known lotteries were common in those days and the churches of Newport, as of other towns, resorted to them for financial help and few if any thought it wrong.

In the Newport Mercury of June 5, 1807, we find the following advertisement:—

#### NEWPORT METHODIST CHAPEL LOTTERY.

10,000 Dollars a going for only 5 Dollars. Now is the time to make your fortune. Tickets in the above Lottery for sale at the Auction Room of Lopez & Dexter, where a scheme of the lottery may be seen. It is hoped that those who wish to encourage religion, laying aside the prospect of a fortune, will call and purchase liberally. No deduction from prices.

It is evident that the movers meant business, for the next week the same paper contained this additional advertisement:—

---

10,000 DOLLARS, THE HIGHEST PRIZE FOR  
5 DOLLARS.

Adventurers! You have now a fine chance to make your fortune. If you do not buy a ticket you will not draw a prize.

Tickets in the Newport Methodist Chapel Lottery of John C. Shaw, No. 3 Washington Square.

And the next week and for several issues after we find this announcement in large type:—

Nothing Venture, Nothing Have. Now is your time Adventurers to try your good fortune or lose only five dollars. You may gain Ten Thousand Dollars and cannot lose but five dollars on trial in the Newport Methodist Chapel Lottery. JAMES PERRY.

The editor of the paper also announces "Tickets in the Newport Methodist Chapel Lottery for sale at this office."

All this sounds very strange in these times, but it was not at all unusual in those days. Trinity parish and the Congregational Church, the Tiverton Bridge Company, prominent schools and colleges all raised money in this way. In this case none of the men who advertised were actual communicants in the church, but that made no difference. Public sentiment, which

will now scarcely tolerate a church fair, in the "good old days of the fathers" approved the most gigantic schemes of the sort.

We have the best authority for saying that this lottery was never drawn, and no money came into the hands of Messrs. Perry and Wightman from this source. Why it was a failure we cannot now ascertain but probably because it did not receive sufficient support, and so the money paid in for tickets was refunded to the adventurers.

It is a little singular that no allusion was made in the public prints to the dedication of the church. It is understood that though not fully completed at the time the event occurred, May, 1807, Samuel Merwin, who was the preacher in charge, preached the sermon. One whose memory runs back to near that time and who was familiar with many of the principal actors says that the text was Nehemiah iv : 2—What do these feeble Jews? Will they fortify themselves? Will they sacrifice? Will they make an end in a day? Will they revive the stones out of the heaps of rubbish which are burned?



When it was noised abroad that a Methodist church had been built in Newport with a steeple and pews, and that it was fitted up with ornaments like those of other denominations, there was a decided sensation. Good Bishop Asbury lifted his hands with holy horror when he first saw it and predicted that a church which began with a steeple would end with a choir, and perhaps even with an organ. It is understood that this was the first Methodist church with pews, steeple and bell in America, and probably in the world, as the objections to these accessories were even stronger in England than in this country. The steeple remains to this day unchanged, but the bell is not the same, and the old square pews long since passed away. Indeed this is the third time the auditorium has been reseatd and provided with more modern furnishings, though it may well be doubted whether all the changes have been for the better.

The society thus established met with much favor in the town. Many of the most prominent families connected themselves with the congregation which at once became

.

one of the most fashionable, if not the most pious, of its class in all New England. Unlike the early churches it had an element of "worldliness" in its composition which would not have won the approval of Wesley and his immediate associates. Several of its most active managers were not in harmony with the spirit of the new sect though they desired its prosperity, and many of the leaders in the movement never went further than the outer portals of the church. They were the friends of Methodism but not real converts to the faith.



## VI.

### SUCCESSIVE PASTORS.

---

AS has been already stated, Reuben Hubbard was the first stationed minister at Newport and it was under his direction that the building of the church was commenced.

The second regular pastor was Rev. Samuel Merwin, a man whose name is honored wherever his record is known. For nearly half a century he labored with great success, for he was an able and eloquent preacher, a wise and prudent counsellor, and worthy of his high vocation. He came to Newport in 1807 and remained two years. His works followed him and the fragrance of his name remained among the people for many years.

In 1809 Daniel Webb, whom many in the city still remember, was stationed at Newport. He was then a young man, but

he lived to preach the Gospel continuously for sixty-four years and won the distinction before he retired from active work of becoming the oldest effective Methodist minister in the world. Mr. Webb spent nine years in all in the pastorate of this church, adding to the means of a livelihood for himself and somewhat large family by teaching school, having the use of the class room of the church, then located where the organ recently stood, for that purpose. A few of his pupils remain to this day and we never hear them speak of him except with the highest respect for his memory. Among these is Oliver Read who a few years since, though a member of another church, gave \$300 towards our Sunday school fund. It is scarcely necessary to say that in order to serve the church so long Mr. Webb was obliged to sever his connection with the Conference and to become a local preacher.

Mr. Webb's first pastorate continued two years when, after a brief supply by the Rev. Mr. Frost, Benjamin F. Lambert came to the charge. Under his ministry the church prospered and the congregation increased.

At the close of Daniel Webb's long term of service in 1825, the total membership was ninety-five. Some idea of the luxurious living on the part of the preachers of those days may be formed from the fact that such a man as he, whose labors were blessed in the conversion of many souls, and who had the favor of the people, received a yearly salary of \$140. One of the reasons for continuing Mr. Webb here so long was that Newport was so isolated that the circuit preachers could not well get here in their rounds. The society took pains to say, and to spread it upon their records, that they wished to be considered a part of the Methodist Episcopal Church and to share in all its peculiarities; and that it was only because of the particular circumstances of the case that this departure from custom was asked. This consideration had also much to do in obtaining the consent of the Conference and the approval of the Bishop.

Enoch Mudge followed Mr. Webb in 1825 and remained in charge two years. He was one of the fathers of the New Eng-

land church and was held in highest esteem throughout the connection. His pastorate was eminently successful.

Next came Samuel Norris, under whose labors there was an extensive revival of religion. This gentleman in his later years, when unable to do active work, made it his business to visit his former charges as frequently as possible, and many of us remember him as he came to Newport from time to time with his ear trumpet in hand, a noble specimen of a happy old man and a hopeful Christian.



## VII.

### ORGANIZATION OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.

---

THE Sunday school was organized during the administration of Mr. Norris, July 20th, 1827. Up to that date the children of the congregation had attended a union school under the superintendency of Mr. William Guild. But it was now thought proper to make a change, as it was evident that a single school could not do the work for all.

A meeting was accordingly held and a Sunday school society formed. Its officers were:—President, Hon. Dutee J. Pearce, well known in the annals of the state and nation; Vice President, George W. Sayer; Treasurer, Otis Chafee, and Secretary, Peter P. Remington. The Board of Managers consisted of the above and Benjamin Hall, Joseph Lyon, Jr., William Card, Jr., J. T. Almy and George C. Shaw.



At a meeting of the board held soon after the school was fully organized and put in working condition, George W. Sayer and William Card were appointed superintendents, Otis Chafee, treasurer, and Peter P. Remington, secretary. Of these officers Mr. William Card still lives and is the oldest man in the city, being now ninety-six years of age. Both he and his associate, George W. Sayer, who is also living, together with Mr. Chafee, the treasurer, withdrew and went to another denomination at a later period, under influences to which reference will be made in the proper order.

Peter P. Remington, the secretary, has been a marked man in the history of the school and of the church at large. He was not at this time nor for many years after a member of the church, though no one took a deeper interest in its affairs. He had been elected a member of the corporation in 1811 and became clerk of that body, a position which he held for thirty-six years to the satisfaction of all concerned. His connection with the Sunday school con-

tinued until near the close of his long and useful life. In a period of declension when superintendents and other officers and teachers withdrew, he stood faithful, filling as best he could the many places made vacant. In these cases of emergency he acted as superintendent, treasurer, secretary and teacher all at the same time. As he was not a professor of religion and could not conscientiously open the school with prayer, when no brethren were present he would induce some sister to pray in the opening service, and when this help failed him he has been known to go on with the exercises with prayers omitted. He believed in the church and in the Sunday school and would not be turned aside from his purpose.

Mr. Remington became a member of the church in 1853, and died in 1864, full of years and of honors. He leaves a daughter, Mrs. Samuel Carr, in this city, who still occupies the family pew and has two granddaughters who are members of the church. Another daughter, Mrs. Richardson, resides in Providence and these have joined to honor his memory by placing an

appropriate memorial window in position bearing also the name of Rualmy Remington, his devoted wife, who was also warmly attached to the cause.

The first teachers included John Davis, Henry Holley, D. L. Winslow, Jeremiah Hazard, Mary Hall, Mary Ann Lyon, Ann Agnes Topham, Hannah Easton, Louisa Topham, Patience Brownell, Elizabeth Shaw and Sarah A. Cornell.

Of these John Davis was not then a member of the church but afterwards became one and remained steadfast to the end of a long and useful life.

Henry Holley and Mary Hall were some time after married and went out of the school to spend their days together. They both still survive, having removed to South Kingstown in this state.

D. L. Winslow was an active and earnest member of the school, and closed his life suddenly while about his business in the store occupied by T. Mumford Seabury.

Ann Agnes Topham is the wife of William R. Pitman and is one of our most honored members, having joined the church

under the labors of Mr. Norris and remained steadfast until this day.

Louisa Topham belonged like the preceding to a family that has been connected in its various branches with the church from its earliest history. She married Richard Williams, a brother of John E. Williams, the New York banker, and died many years since happy in the Lord.

Patience Brownell was the daughter of Nathan Brownell who long served the church as steward and treasurer. She married William Holmes and now resides in New Bedford, a member of the Fourth street church.

Elizabeth Shaw was the daughter of Richard Shaw and afterwards married Gardiner B. Reynolds, a name that is preserved in her son who is well known to us all.

Mary Ann Lyon was the daughter of Joseph Lyon, then a prominent and active member of the church and long well known in the city. She married Henry C. Chase and now resides on Liberty Square.

Sarah A. Cornell, who died in 1881, continued in the school till near the time of her

departure, a period of more than fifty years. No teacher has a better record and there are many among us who have been under her instruction and who can bear testimony to her faithfulness and devotion to the work. She not only had in her successive classes the children but the grandchildren of her early pupils, and few were ever favored with a purer or wiser instructor. Nor was she merely a Sunday school worker. She delighted in all the services of the church and through prosperity and adversity alike stood at her post. She was also actively connected with many outside charities, and has a fitting memorial window in the church which we are now to occupy, placed there by her brother, Mr. Richard Cornell, who has long taken a deep interest in our prosperity.

Hannah Easton was not at the organization of the school a member of the church but joined in the year 1828, and though small in stature proved herself mighty in good works. She belonged to one of the families who originally purchased this island from the Indians, and who lived upon the

heritage thus acquired. The early zeal which she manifested never abated. She was pre-eminently the friend of the poor and lived for them and not for herself alone. Like the Divine Master she went about doing good and when she died many were the widows and orphans who, as at the death of ancient Dorcas, could bring the garments which she had procured for them and weep over the loss of their dearest friend. A window has been placed in position as a memorial to her virtues, contributed by the united efforts of many old friends.

Thus this company of young people who entered the school on that July morning as teachers of the little classes gathered by the faithful pastor helped to lay the foundations of a long continued and important work. They builded doubtless better than they knew, for no one of them could have foreseen what has followed. The school thus established has continued until this day and was never more efficient than under the charge of its present superintendent, Mr. Jere. W. Horton, who has for several years guided its counsels.

Among its superintendents in addition to those named have been :—Benjamin Mumford, John Allan, Christopher G. Handy, George Alvin Simmons, Micah J. Talbot, Lucius D. Davis, Thomas E. Cox.





## VIII.

### THE GREAT DECLENSION.

---

THE term of service of Mr. Norris expired in 1829, when the number of members was reported as ninety-five. For a time Newport and Portsmouth were joined in one charge and the returns show a united membership of 164. The two societies remained under a single pastor, however, but a brief period. Stephen Puffer, who was noted as an excellent preacher, was the appointee of the Conference, and his health failing, James Porter, now Dr. Porter, supplied the vacancy. As a young man he even then gave promise of his future success as a minister and an author. He was followed by Thomas W. Tucker, who remained two years, leaving the society in a prosperous and hopeful condition.

In 1832 Asa Kent was appointed to the charge. He was one of the strong men of

the denomination, able in the pulpit, wise in counsel and firm as the hills in the maintenance of his purposes. It was fortunate indeed, that he came, for it was a year of trial and adversity such as few churches are called to meet. The story need not be told in detail. Ephraim K. Avery, who was pastor of the church in Bristol, was accused of having committed murder in Newport county and was accordingly brought here for trial. He was lodged in the jail, which stands directly opposite the church, where he remained a considerable length of time. Opinions were greatly divided as to his guilt or innocence and the excitement throughout the country ran high. Parties were formed both in and out of the church, and so intense was the feeling that old friendships were severed and bitter feuds everywhere engendered. Strangely enough not a few, in their want of discretion, allowed their hostility to Avery to bear against the church to which he belonged, and so they entered upon a fearful crusade against Methodism itself. It was one of those excitements that occasionally sweep

over communities, when reason seems to lose its sway and passion rules the hour. The church seemed as much divided in opinion as did the town. Indeed, some of the warmest friends that Avery had were men who did not attend upon his ministry, but who, believing him innocent gave freely of their influence and worldly means for his defense.

The feeling in Newport became so intense that with a less earnest and less determined man than Asa Kent, the whole might have gone to ruin. But the pastor held bravely on, not as a special defender or apologist for the accused, but as a believer in the church. As the trial proceeded the congregation was greatly reduced. More than one half the members openly withdrew and many of the more timorous of those who remained forsook the altars of Zion. So great was the excitement that often but a single man would be at the prayer meeting and sometimes none at all; and even the godly women who dared go to the Methodist church were hooted in the streets and made to feel that

they were in danger of personal injury. But Asa Kent held on in his work, turning neither to the right hand or the left and was not without his reward. Without venturing an opinion as to the merits of the question it seems strange, indeed, that friends and members of the church should have deserted her communion on the question of the guilt or innocence of an individual minister.

Avery was acquitted and went his way, but the verdict of the jury did not influence the opinions which had been formed in advance, nor soften the asperities engendered. Few were left to build up the waste places of Zion or bear aloft the standard around which so many had rejoiced to gather.

It is pleasant to be able to note at such a time as this examples of faithfulness to duty and adherence to principle. While many of the church and congregation were bending before the storm there were a few brave and hopeful spirits whose faith never wavered, and whose hands wearied not. Among these was Jeremiah Hazard, who had been

received into the church in 1828, and who was among the early Sunday school workers. He was a man of strong convictions, possessed of an iron will and inspired by a zeal that knew no bounds. While the community was excited and the throngs rushed to and fro, watching the great trial and discussing its merits, it is said that Mr. Hazard never once entered the court room as a spectator of what was going on. His house was filled with ministers and others who came to study the case and participate in the fierce discussions of the hour, and he, not a man of wealth, worked daily at his trade that he might entertain them and help support the afflicted church. In all this he was cheerfully aided by his companion, Mrs. Harriet Hazard, whose house was long a welcome home for the itinerants of those days. When the storm passed by, both were still faithful to their early vows. Mr. Hazard was class-leader, steward, treasurer, and trustee, responding to every call made upon him. He lived many years after and saw the society arise from its low estate and become stronger

than ever before. He died in 1878, and has a window placed to his memory in the church where he so long worshipped, a fitting tribute to his worth. He left a daughter, Mrs. George H. Wilson, who occupies the old pew. Mr. Wilson is one of the present trustees, and a member of the building committee engaged in making the recent extensive improvements. The window referred to is the gift of himself and family.

And these were not alone in their constancy. Alexander Murray and his wife, Margaret Murray, joined the church in this year of its trial and remained true and faithful. Mr. Murray died in 1845, while Mrs. Murray lived to a ripe old age, an earnest worker and liberal giver. Her last public donation was a legacy of \$500 towards the erection of the present parsonage, a most timely and useful gift. In speaking of those days, she once told the writer that she had been hooted in the streets and even threatened with bodily injury for attending Methodist meetings. But Margaret Murray was not the woman to quail before such opposition.

Abby R. Hazard joined in 1828, and is still living. Though by the weight of years now kept from the public services, she not only maintained her warm love and cheerful faith through this sad trial, but has stood faithful ever since and is calmly awaiting her place in the redeemed church where trials and sorrows never come.

Benjamin Mumford joined the church in 1831, a year before the bursting of the storm, and no one who ever knew him would expect that the speech of the people would turn him from his course. For more than thirty years he was a member of the official board, true to his convictions, fearless in the exposure of wrong both in church and in state, and uncompromising in everything that related to moral principle. In public as well as in private life, he was not afraid to take the unpopular side of questions at issue, and he lived to see most of the at first unpopular reforms which he advocated, accepted by the people. Such a man, though never a favorite with the unthinking crowd, commands the respect of the community by his uprightness of



purpose, and it is doubtful if there is one who formed his acquaintance but will accord to his memory a tribute of praise for his fidelity and devotion. Though but a young convert at the time of which we speak, he wavered not. He died in peace in 1880, after a membership of fifty years.

And there were others who stood faithful and gave the church and Sunday school their earnest support. Among these we should not overlook the names of Theophilus Topham, who, though never a communicant, was always a warm and firm friend; Hearty B. Heath, who still lingers on the shores of time, and Sally Lyon, whose zeal led to untold sacrifices for the cause. And there were still others, some of whose names appear elsewhere, who wavered not. To their constancy and zeal the church owes much, and their names should ever be kept in memory as among those worthy of praise.

## IX.

### A SEASON OF TRIALS AND TRIUMPHS.

---

IT is remarkable that prosperity should have so soon returned to the torn and hated society. Most of its members had gone, some to other churches where they continued in Christian service, and some to the world's beggarly elements never to return. The outside influence which had always set strongly in its favor was now largely hostile. But the few who remained were hopeful, knowing in whom they trusted, and believing in Him who never forsakes his people. They maintained all the services of the church, and cheered by their courageous pastor, waited the coming of better days. Nor was their faith disappointed.

John Lord came to the pastorate in 1834, and was a worthy successor of Asa Kent.

He did not stop to argue with men as to the merits of the questions at issue, nor did he depend upon the favor of society at large. He knew that help must come from on high, and with his brethren carried his cause to the mercy seat. Nor did he or they seek the spiritual baptism in vain. The cloud, at first no bigger than a man's hand, soon overspread the heavens and plenteous showers of grace fell upon the people. A revival of religion such as the society had never yet experienced followed. The congregation steadily increased, and the finances improved until it was evident to all that the Methodist church was to live, and not die as had been by many fondly expected. Mr. Lord remained but one year and left a total membership of one hundred and forty.

Among those who were the fruits of this revival were such well known and life long members as Elizabeth W. Almy, Martha Burdick, William J. Holt, Mary Heath, Elizabeth Sherman, Sally Stewart, Sarah Hull, and Louisa B. Spooner.

The next minister was Louis Janson who began with unusual protestations of attachment and zeal for the struggling church. He drew to himself many personal friends and then announced his purpose to withdraw and go to another denomination. As he remained in the city taking charge of a parish, he drew some after him who had been able to withstand the open assaults of enemies of the cause, but were not able to resist the blandishments of a professed friend and trusted leader. Many others had been but recently gathered in, and they were also the more easily led away ; and at the close of the year the members had been reduced to ninety-five, nearly as low as at the termination of the Avery trial.

Mr. Janson was succeeded by Thomas Ely, afterward a Presiding Elder, who proved the man for the place, and who, by his wise counsels, checked the decline and again turned attention to the true work of the church.

Next came Jonathan Cady, who is now the oldest minister whose name is on the Conference rolls. Under his administration

extensive improvements and repairs were made upon the house of worship, and the society dwelt in peace.

Isaac Stoddard followed and few men ever left a deeper impress for good on the community. He was devout, earnest, and practical and the church grew and prospered under his guidance. Among those who now came in was John Allan, whose connection with the society has continued to this day. He has served in all the official relations known to our economy and was for a long time treasurer, chorister, teacher and superintendent in the Sunday school, where he did good service. His wife, whose maiden name was Matilda Topham, had joined in 1828, and their house was always open to the itinerants of those days who came in the service of the Master. His mother, Sarah R. Allan, became a member in 1850, and likewise took an active interest in the church. She died in 1869. Lewis Caswell, Mary Bryer, Rebecca Spooner and others who lived long among us were also fruits of this revival.

Franklin Gavitt came next and was also eminently successful. A good revival influence prevailed throughout the term and at its close the membership was one hundred and eighty, the largest it had ever yet been. Those were days of harmony and spiritual power when the losses of previous years were largely recovered, though many outside families formerly attending had not returned. As a social element the church was less prominent than formerly, but as a religious organization it was already vastly superior.

The next preacher was Joel Knight, who came in 1842, and under whose labors was probably the most powerful revival ever enjoyed by the churches of Newport. He found the society in a hopeful and prosperous condition and had been here but a short time when the town began to be strangely moved. All classes became interested in the subject of religion. The church was crowded by night and by day; business was practically suspended, and all minds were turned to the contemplation of sacred things. Hundreds began a new and

better life, and the genuineness and permanency of the work is attested by the fact that many of the converts became leading members in this and other churches, while not a few even at this day are true to the vows made at that time. Those were the palmy days of the Newport church, and no better proof of the desirability and permanency of special revival influences can be afforded than is found in the fruits of that work after the lapse of so many years. It is true that some who start at such times go back to their old ways, and the results here were no exception to the rule. To declaim against revivals would be, on our part, a strange inconsistency, for Methodism itself is a revival.

At the same time important changes were made in the house of worship which was raised up, and a vestry put underneath, while the whole building was repaired and improved at a cost of about \$1200. The close of Mr. Knight's pastorate, which continued but a single year, found a total membership, including probationers, of 306. This is the largest number which has ever

been reported, though the total membership in the two churches has been for some years considerably greater.

But few of the many gathered in at that time can here be mentioned. Among them is John C. Braman, long one of our stewards and a trustee, the chairman of the committee under whose superintendence the latest improvements have been made. Another was Job Lawton, still among us, though by infirmities kept from the house of worship. William D. Morehead, Elizabeth Sherman, Isaac W. Sherman, Hannah Stoddard, Phebe Goddard, George H. Wilson, Thomas Goddard, William C. Irish, Frances Topham, Clark Weaver, Mary W. Hazard, George Popple, W. C. Thurston and many others, whose names have long been familiar, were enrolled at this time.

Of these William C. Thurston was long a steward. Clarke Weaver's life and devotion, universally recognized, are now honored by an emblematic window placed to his memory by his children, Mr. James L. Weaver, president of the present board



of trustees, and Mrs. Robert S. Franklin. George Popple was a valued official member, and of several others we have occasion to speak elsewhere.

In this year, 1844, the session of the annual conference was held in this city, and it proved an occasion of great interest. Bishop Hedding, one of the strong men of the age, presided, assisted by Bishop Janes who had just been elected to the episcopate and was entering upon that remarkable career of usefulness which has seldom been surpassed. Dr. Stephen H. Olin, than whom Methodism has never produced an abler preacher, was also present, pleading for the struggling Wesleyan University over which he presided, and whose very existence was imperilled for want of funds. The late Dr. David Patten was secretary, and among those ordained was Robert M. Hatfield, the youthful pastor, who was then just entering upon the work of his ministry. The Rev. E. B. Bradford followed and he in time was succeeded by Rev. Richard Livesey. Bartholomew Otheman came in 1848. He is the father-

in-law of Dr. Abel Stevens, the historian and accomplished author, who with his marvellous pulpit eloquence and power occasionally occupied this pulpit greatly to the pleasure of those who heard him. Next came Asa U. Swinerton, of precious memory, and J. B. Husted, who, though eighty years of age, occasionally visits us and is always welcome; as is also John Lovejoy, who was his successor and who is also now on the superannuated list.

These were years of prosperity, and many pleasant memories cluster about each of these pastors and their well-planned work. The fruits of their labors remain in the persons of many of our members then converted, who are now active in the support of the church in its several departments of labor.



## X.

### LATER YEARS OF PROSPERITY.

---

**I**N 1855 Frederick Upham was appointed to Newport as pastor, his administration proving a great blessing to the people. He was one of the fathers, even then, and still lives after more than fifty years in the active ministry, the acknowledged Nestor of the Conference. Few men in New England are more worthy to be remembered for life long devotion to the work of the itinerant ministry.

During the administration of Mr. Upham it was thought advisable to formally organize a mission in the southern part of the city, and accordingly on the 19th of April, 1856, twenty-seven persons took letters from the parent society and banded together under the charge of O. N. Brooks, who became their pastor. Several others followed at a later date, and the

Thames-Street Methodist Episcopal Church was founded for permanent work. This was an important movement and time has demonstrated the wisdom of those who planned and executed it. Among those who went into the new enterprise were some of our most excellent and useful members and the old church could but feel the loss.

Micah J. Talbot, now a presiding elder, was stationed in Newport in 1857 and had a pleasant and prosperous pastorate. During his term the present organ was procured and placed in the church. Dr. Talbot was greatly assisted by Mr. Eben Tourgee, now of Boston but then residing in Newport, in procuring the instrument, and to his services the congregation is greatly indebted. The placing of the organ in front required changes in the entrance which were effected, and other improvements in the house of worship were also made. Mr. Talbot was called to the presidency of East Greenwich Seminary before the expiration of his constitutional term, and the vacancy was supplied

by J. B. Husted, who thus came back to his old field of labor. Dr. Talbot was afterward elected the first superintendent of the public schools in this city, and did much towards laying the foundation of the present successful system.

Henry S. White came as pastor in 1859 and remained two years. Under his ministry the congregations continued large and the church prosperous. Mr. White was afterward a chaplain in the United States army, and as a prisoner of war suffered all the horrors of Andersonville, the story of which he told in the old pulpit when peace had been restored.

Charles H. Titus, one of the leading ministers in the Conference, was appointed to Newport in 1861 and enjoyed a pleasant pastorate. He was followed by L. D. Davis in 1863 who remained three years, the constitutional limit having been extended by the General Conference at its previous session. Next came D. A. Whedon, who was transferred from Central New York. Dr. Whedon is well known throughout the denomination as one of our

prominent clergymen, and he left a strong and favorable impress on the parish. The church was left "to be supplied" by another transfer at the close of his term, but the contemplated arrangements were not carried out, and George M. Hamlin was sent to fill the vacancy which he did with success.

In 1869 E. S. Stanley came to the charge and remained two years. During his term the vestry was remodelled and reseated, and various other improvements made to the house of worship at an expense of about \$2,500.

During these years several of the old and valued members were removed by death. Among them was one possessed of a remarkable history. Mrs. Elizabeth Granville was a native of England and was the mother of Rev. Samuel Adlam, so long the pastor of the First Baptist Church in this city. She was born in Shropshire in 1769, and died in 1865, when about ninety-five years of age. In 1786 she joined the Wesleyan class in Bristol, England, and continued a Methodist for seventy-nine years. In her

early life she listened to the preaching of John Wesley, and later on had sat under the ministry of Adam Clark and the most noted ministers of those days. When she was past ninety years of age she was often seen at the prayer meeting on evenings when it was so stormy that not more than a dozen constituted the congregation. She came on such occasions with her lantern in hand, often wholly unattended, and always intent upon the one purpose of her life. She suffered the loss of her mental faculties during the year or two preceding her departure, but up to that time was possessed of a clear mind, a strong will, and a warm heart.

James C. Powell died the same year, 1865. He is remembered by many as a good man, having by a consistent life won the respect of the community at large as well as of his brethren in the church. He was a class leader, steward, and trustee and filled important positions in the city government from time to time. His family is still with us.

William C. Thurston was one of those who passed on far beyond the allotted term of man's years. He became a member of this church in 1845, and died at the ripe old age of ninety-four years. He was a good and true man, active in temperance and other christian work, and an attendant on all the means of grace to the last. He held a place in the board of stewards for a long time, was an officer in the Sunday school, and was always faithful to the trusts committed to his charge. He was at the time of his decease the oldest man in the city.

Thus the fathers were passing away and younger men were coming on in their places. The society continued active and efficient, and though it was sad to look upon the vacant places, it was joyous to remember that these all died in hope of a better country where there is neither sorrow nor death.



## XI.

### THE THAMES-STREET CHURCH.

---

REFERENCE has already been made to the organization of the second church in this city. The movement originated from a sincere desire to promote the spiritual interests of a neglected portion of the town, and was undertaken as a mission enterprise, but with scarcely a thought of an independent parish. The first services held consisted of prayer and class meetings at various private houses, but mostly at the residence of Mrs. Fidelia Slocum, on Pope street. Though not remarkably successful in influencing the classes most in need, these proved seasons of refreshing to the souls of those believers who participated in them.

Meetings of this kind, with more or less regularity, were continued for nearly a dozen years, during all of which period

there was a slightly growing interest. In 1854, while John Lovejoy was pastor, the official board of the Marlboro street church took formal action looking to more definiteness in the enterprise, and a committee was appointed to procure a place for stated worship. As a result an old school house was procured in Milburn court, and in August Mr. Lovejoy commenced regular services therein, preaching Sunday afternoons at six o'clock. This was hard work for the pastor as it required three sermons, and these were to be supplemented with an evening prayer meeting. The field was too full of promise, however, to be abandoned, and so the quarterly conference requested the appointment of an assistant. The Presiding Elder accordingly designated James H. Cooley as a helper of Mr. Lovejoy and he promptly entered upon the appointment.

The place of worship was soon changed to a vacant store on Sisson's wharf, where a class was organized, though still in connection with the parent church. Here in a humble and unpretending manner the foun-

dations were laid for a work the magnitude of which could have scarcely been anticipated.

In 1855, while Mr. Upham was in charge, O. N. Brooks was sent by the Conference to labor in "South Newport" and to give, if possible, a still more tangible form to the mission. It was not a very inviting field of labor for the new pastor, when considered from his standpoint. On his arrival in the city he had no difficulty in discovering "South Newport," but found himself in an appointment without a single church member and without any visible means of support. His was a parish with neither house of worship nor congregation. A small missionary appropriation had been made by the Conference toward his financial support, and this was continued for a number of years. Aside from this the preacher was dependent upon such friends as might be raised up and upon the congregation yet to be gathered.

Fortunately Mr. Upham and the old church of which this was a branch took a deep interest in the new movement, and

both pastor and people did what they could for Mr. Brooks and the cause which he came to serve. Dr. Upham wrote to Bishop Janes asking that South Newport be temporarily considered a part of his parish, saying: "As it now is Brother Brooks finds himself preacher-in-charge of South Newport without a single member. The brethren who will eventually form the new church are all members of my charge. My people are able and willing, with the missionary money, to support us both. The brethren prefer the arrangement of being one charge." In response to this, Bishop Janes officially joined the two, they never having been actually separated, and then appointed Frederick Upham preacher-in-charge, and O. N. Brooks assistant. This appointment bears date May 31, 1855.

The next important step was to procure a stated and more convenient place of worship, and after much inquiry and consultation the site now occupied on the corner of Thames and Brewer streets was purchased at a cost of \$3000. The lot was of ample proportions for church and chapel, and

there was on it at the time an old dwelling house. The congregation was unable to build and so the house, at an expense of about \$500, was fitted for temporary use in which regular services were held. Judged by ordinary standards the place was not attractive, but the worshippers found it a place of joy, where God poured out His spirit and saved many souls.

On the 19th of April, 1856, twenty-seven persons took letters from the parent church and were organized into a new society. Their names were Clark Burdick, Martha Burdick, Isaac W. Sherman, Emily D. Sherman, William J. Holt, Eliza G. Holt, Edward S. Hildreth, Seth Swinburne, Ira S. Eldredge, Sarah H. Eldredge, William D. Morehead, Sally Morehead, Alexis M. Slocum, Mary G. Albro, Susan A. Carr, Levi J. Greene, Benjamin A. Sayer, Jacob H. Lamb, Harriet F. Lamb, David Reed, Charles Williams, Rebecca Williams, Hannah Peabody, Mary E. Mowry, Sarah Slocum, Mary E. Sherman, Susan C. Kaull.

Of these we can call attention, personally, to but a few. Clark Burdick was from the first a leading spirit in the movement. He had united with the church in 1849, and had always occupied a prominent place in its membership. As he resided in the south part of the city, and knew well the wants of the community, he entered heartily into the new enterprise, giving freely of his means as well as his time and prayers for its success. His wife, Martha Burdick, had been a member since 1835. Both have since passed away, but they lived to see the church which they helped to found on the highway of prosperity. Two of their daughters, Mrs. Lewis L. Simmons and Mrs. Edwin Stevens are still members in the old church.

Isaac W. Sherman was also especially active in effecting the new organization, and has continued as he began. He was converted in the great revival under Joel Knight, in 1843, and was long an official member of the old church, as he has ever been of the new. In looking after the financial interests of the society he has made

the acquaintance of the whole public and inspired many with a disposition to give freely to a good cause. It is largely due to him that the society has never been burdened with debt.

Seth Swinburne has occupied various official positions from the first, has been in charge of the church music, and is still actively identified with all the interests of the parish.

William D. Morehead removed from the city after a season of active work, but has since returned, and is now in the First Church. He has been a member since 1843.

William J. Holt's membership also dates back to the revival under Joel Knight, and he too was an official member of the First Church, as he has always been of the new. He is president of the board of trustees at the present time, and one of the stewards.

Edward S. Hildreth had been in the Sunday school at Marlboro' street, and was made the first superintendent of the new school. He continues to maintain his interest in the enterprise which he helped to establish.

Ira S. Eldredge removed not many years after, and became an earnest local preacher in the West.

To the number thus banded together, others, from the parent church, were soon added by letter, and several were at once received on probation. Among these last was Nathan G. Kenyon, who was appointed a class leader at the first, and who has filled that and other official positions to this day. He is now a class leader and trustee in the First Church. The society when fully organized contained fifty-eight members and probationers, all of whom were full of hope for the future.

The first quarterly conference was organized June 7, 1856, at which time the new charge may be considered organized as an independent church. The following persons constituted the conference :

Presiding Elder—Charles H. Titus.

Pastor—O. N. Brooks.

Stewards—Clark Burdick, I. W. Sherman, Benjamin S. Seattle, William D. Morehead, Edward S. Hildreth, Daniel Jackson, George N. Lawton.



Class Leaders—Nathan G. Kenyon, Ira S. Eldredge, William J. Holt.

The pastor's first quarterly report was of a very encouraging nature. There had already been several hopeful conversions, and others were inquiring the way of life. The advent of the new society was favorably received by the community, and several who were members of other churches had tendered assistance and already given substantial aid.

The Sunday school, in charge of E. S. Hildreth, reported sixteen officers and teachers, and seventy-five scholars. It continued rapidly to increase, and at the next report had seven bible classes, five infant classes and one hundred and fifteen pupils. Its library had swollen to five hundred volumes. Among the contributions to its library fund was one of \$30 from Aquidneck Engine company.

The second pastor was E. A. Lyon, who came in 1858, and entered earnestly into the work. He found the young society struggling for its very existence, but resolute in purpose and fully united in spirit

and action. A precious revival influence rested upon the congregation, and about fifty hopeful conversions were reported the first quarter. The work of grace continued during the year, and in January not less than ninety probationers were on the records, of whom a fair proportion became members in full.

Mr. Lyon remained two years, and was succeeded by William H. Richards, who was also quite successful in gathering and holding a congregation. He sought earnestly to secure a proper house of worship, and was proceeding successfully with his plans, in which the society cheerfully joined, when two or three manufactories in the vicinity were burned, involving heavy financial loss on that section of the town. The people were also scattered, and it was found impossible to proceed. The congregation suffered much from this calamity, in the removal of members as well as in the loss of financial strength. Next came William Livesey as pastor, a man of sound judgment and an earnest and tireless

worker. He remained two years and left an impress for good that has never been effaced.

At the expiration of his term, E. A. Lyon was returned to the charge. He found the society much stronger than when he came to it before, but still laboring under many disadvantages. The old dwelling house, which had been fitted for church purposes, was still in use, but it afforded very poor accommodations, and there was little in external appearances to attract public attention. It was still the uppermost wish to build, but through the many reverses that had come to the community it seemed almost a hopeless task. After much consideration it was, however, resolved to make an effort in this direction. The church had always been a mission, receiving aid from the Missionary Society, and it was believed that the citizens of Newport not connected with the parish would also aid in the work. Nor were the promoters of the object disappointed in this respect. After subscribing liberally themselves, they went outside, and were met with a liberal Christian spirit from

other churches and from all classes of citizens. The subscriptions were soon sufficient to authorize a beginning, and the present house of worship was erected. When completed it was entirely paid for, so that the society did not rest under the usual burden of a debt.

The old building, which had so long been in use as a house of worship, was removed to the rear of the lot and fitted for a chapel, and the new one was completed and dedicated to the service of Almighty God by Bishop Janes on the 21st of December, in the year 1866. Sidney Dean, of Providence, preached in the evening, and several city pastors were present, taking part in the exercises. Up to this time the sum raised by subscription for the building fund was \$8,100, and \$900 was subscribed on the day of dedication, a balance which covered the entire cost of the building.

Frederick Upham, D. D., was appointed to the charge in 1867, and remained two years; the right man in the right place. He had been largely instrumental in founding the church, during his former pastorate

in the city, and knew its wants. During his term the congregation increased and the society was greatly strengthened.

Asa N. Bodfish was the next pastor, who also remained two years, doing a good work. He was followed by B. A. Chase, who was transferred from Maine, and whose early death was mourned by his many friends here and elsewhere.

E. F. Jones was appointed to the charge in 1873, and also continued two years. During his term the old chapel was taken down and the present commodious structure erected in its place. It was built at a cost of \$3,800 and fully paid for. Bishop Wiley officiated at the dedication, which occurred February 10, 1874. In the evening of the same day there was a pastors' reunion, at which were present most of those who had been in charge. Among the notable features of the occasion was a poem by Mr. Chase, in which he humorously sketched the progress of events in the parish.

At the close of the pastorate of Mr. Jones the congregation was larger than at any previous time, and the society in a more

hopeful condition. His successor was S. Leader, who came in 1875, and whose administration was marked by the acquisition of a parsonage, thus making the external departments of the parish complete. The gift of a house and lot for the preacher's home was made by Mrs. Susan Magner, a member of the Congregational Church, who had always taken a deep interest in this society. The parsonage is located on Spring street, where the pastors have since resided.

Mr. Leader was succeeded by William T. Harlow in 1877, whose term extended over two years. They were years of spiritual triumph and of steady growth in all departments. During this term the late Christopher Townsend, whose charities were as boundless as his means, gave the society \$1,000, which proved of great service. Mr. Townsend has since deceased, leaving by will \$2,500 as a fund to aid in the support of the church. His gifts include the magnificent free library which the city enjoys, and many other public and private

benefactions. His is a noble name now imperishably interwoven with the history of Newport.

Mr. Harlow removed West in 1879, on account of feeble health, where he has since died in holy triumph, and O. H. Fernald became his successor. His term of service was marked by a good religious spirit, the church continuing to prosper in all its departments. He remained two years. It is a little remarkable that up to this time no minister had continued in the pastorate the full term allowed by the discipline of the church.



## XII.

### PROSPERITY AND CALAMITY.

---

A NEW act of incorporation for the first church was obtained in 1871, as the old charter did not fully provide for the necessities of the times. Up to this date it had never been incorporated after the manner contemplated by the Book of Discipline. The house of worship was, and is still owned by the pew holders, subject to the general regulations of the denomination, and the pew holders alone are accustomed to act under its authority. Other property that had been acquired was held in a somewhat irregular way, and as it was now in contemplation to sell the parsonage which was in a dilapidated condition, and build a better one, this step was regarded as important. Under this charter the legal name of the parish is made, The First Methodist Episcopal Church of Newport, that of the



other being The Methodist Episcopal Church and Congregation. At present both charters are in force, and the two corporations are working harmoniously together.

D. P. Leavitt was now the pastor, and it was largely through his untiring efforts that the present parsonage was built and furnished. It cost, complete, about \$6,500, and was paid for when finished, by the liberal contributions of the congregation. Mr. Leavitt remained three years, a period of substantial prosperity and blessing.

During this administration the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society was organized, and it has continued to do effective work as one of the most efficient in the Conference. Its first officers consisted of Mrs. L. D. Davis president; Mrs. Martha Ailman, Mrs. Carlos Banning and Mrs. T. W. Freeborne, vice presidents; Miss Katherine L. Smith, corresponding secretary; Miss Ann E. Greene, recording secretary, and Miss Fallie Palmer, treasurer. The organization was completed March 1st, 1874, and the following ladies were appointed as col-

lectors :—Miss Lizzie R. Lawton, Mrs. Peleg Bryer, Mrs. George H. Lovejoy, Mrs. William S. Covell, Miss Gertrude Peabody, Miss Lottie S. Lawton, Mrs. Sarah L. Young, and Miss Hannah Stoddard. Thirty-one ladies became members of the society at that time, and the number has since steadily increased. The annual membership fee is one dollar, and ten dollars paid at any one time constitutes a life membership. The society soon after voted to support a Bible reader in India, and Mrs. McGregor was engaged for the position, with whom communication was maintained until her death. The moneys raised are still devoted to mission work in India.

Mr. Leavitt was succeeded by W. F. Whitcher, whose term was prosperous and highly enjoyable. He remained three years. During his administration the Parsonage Society was formed, which assumed the care and responsibility of the parsonage furniture, and through whose service the wants of the pastor's family in that respect are well supplied from year to year. It was organized in February, 1877, and the fol-

lowing officers were chosen:—Mrs. Joan C. Weaver, president; George H. Lovejoy, Thomas W. Freeborne, and Mrs. Sarah C. Bryer, vice presidents; Miss Bettie F. Dunham, treasurer; Lucius D. Davis, secretary; Mrs. Rachael Groff, Mrs. Amanda C. Lovejoy and Mrs. Mary A. Davis, furnishing committee.

E. M. Smith succeeded to the pastorate in 1877, also remaining the full constitutional term. During his pastorate an extensive revival was enjoyed not only in this church but in nearly all the churches in the city. Special services were held for several weeks, the congregation being greatly indebted to Mrs. Jennie F. Smith, of Providence, who came to assist by her service of song, but who also did efficient work in many other ways. A larger accession was made to the membership than at any one time since the famous revival under Joel Knight to which reference has already been made.

Angelo Canoll was appointed to the charge in 1880, and remained two years. Matters were proceeding quietly and pleas-

antly during his term, when on the 16th day of December, 1881, at a little after midday, an alarm of fire was sounded, and the word quickly passed through the streets that the Methodist Church was in flames. Crowds of people soon gathered about the venerable sanctuary, who with intense interest stood in the chill blasts and watched the progress of events. From every window where there was an opening, and from every crevice thick smoke issued, telling the sad story of what was going on within. No one was able to enter, for fear of suffocation, and soon the fire was seen creeping up the rear wall to the roof and kindling in a light blaze among the shingles. The firemen, as usual, were promptly on hand and never did they work with a more evident determination to save imperilled property. While the result was yet in doubt, and the general impression prevailed among the by-standers that all was lost, unless other help could be had quickly, the electric alarm bell, which hung in its own tower, again sent forth its peal. It was a strange summons coming from the smoke-enveloped

steeple, and the old tower seemed for the moment to understand its peril and raise its voice in one loud, last call for help. Slowly, as if with the utmost deliberation, and yet sadly, the old church seemed to be saying : Come to the rescue in this my hour of need, and drive back the fire fiend that is devouring my very vitals.

By dint of much hard work the building, though badly damaged, was saved from entire destruction. It was left in a sorry plight, a mere wreck of its former self, and yet amply worthy of preservation.

The society thus found itself suddenly turned out of doors, and for the time being was without a place of worship. But it was soon evident that they were not friendless as well as homeless. The Friends, whose meeting house is near, promptly tendered one of their large rooms for the use of the congregation so long as it should be needed. The Second Baptist Church, also in the immediate vicinity, gave a cordial invitation for the society to worship with them. The Congregationalists tendered assurances that their afflicted brethren would be made wel-

come at their altars. The Thames-street Church, like a dutiful daughter, promptly invited the old mother to her fireside, and the Central Baptists tendered the use of their comfortable and convenient house half of the day on each Sabbath, in which the regular services could be held. They also offered the chapel for Sunday school and week evening prayer meeting. These invitations were so numerous and so cordial that the trustees were greatly embarrassed by the wealth of opportunities. Each offer met the wants of the stricken parish, and each was tendered with such a cordial christian spirit that it was painful to decline either. It was finally decided, as a decision must be made, to accept the offer of the Central Baptist Church, which was done. The First Baptist Church, whose house of worship was undergoing repairs, also worshipped there at the time, so that up to near the session of the Conference in April there were practically three congregations in one.

On the first occasion when the congregation met in the Baptist Church, Dr. Randolph, the pastor, took occasion to extend a

most cordial welcome in which it was apparent that his people heartily joined. Mr. Canoll responded in fitting remarks, and it was evident each succeeding Sabbath, as the two congregations met, that the words spoken were genuine expressions of mutual respect and confidence.

During the pastorate of Mr. Canoll, which continued two years, and was then terminated at his request, the Social and Literary Society was organized for mutual improvement and held several interesting public exercises which were very largely attended. It still gives promise of being of much service to those interested in its work.

During all these years the church has been fully represented in outside charitable and religious societies, through which so much is effected for the welfare of the people. John Allan was long its representative in the Newport Bible Society; Hannah Easton was an efficient worker in several organizations in behalf of the poor; Sarah A. Cornell represented the parish in the Society of Aid for the Aged, and the Home for Friendless Children; Mrs. Mar-

tha Ailman, who has long been foremost in work for others, has served many years in the Dorcas Society with which she is still connected; Mrs. William S. Covell, Jr., is on the board of visitors to the Newport Hospital, and is also connected with the Children's Home, and Mrs. H. C. Bacheller is now doing service in the Townsend Aid for the Aged. In all these the representatives of the church are well supported by other members of the congregation.

The church music has for several years been in charge of Judge Baker, and there are few choirs in the city that surpass it for thoroughness and efficiency. Mr. J. L. Frank is the organist, and the choir is made up of Mrs. William H. Tibbetts, Miss Hattie J. Bacheller, Mrs. J. L. Frank, Miss Helen E. Haddock, Mr. Darius Baker and Mr. T. T. Pitman.



### XIII.

## REBUILDING THE WASTE PLACES.

---

**W**ITHIN a very few days after the disastrous fire a meeting of the corporators of the First Church was called to consider the situation, and make provision for future wants. The Young Men's Christian Association had kindly tendered the use of their rooms at the corner of Thames and Church streets, so far as needed by the congregation, and the invitation was accepted, so that some of the social meetings were held in their comfortable quarters. This meeting was accordingly held in the same place and was largely attended. L. D. Davis was chosen moderator, and T. T. Pitman clerk, and the utmost harmony and good feeling prevailed throughout.

Some of the trustees in advance of the meeting had procured plans for remodelling and rebuilding the house, and now pre-

sented them for consideration. They had been made by T. W. Silloway, a well known church architect of Boston, and seemed to fully meet the necessities of the case. They were carefully considered, and though the expense was more than some had anticipated, were unanimously approved. The trustees were accordingly instructed to proceed with the work of repair according to these plans and specifications, and under the general directions of the architect who was employed to superintend the whole.

As the work of making improvements proceeded some important changes were made in these plans by the trustees, involving considerable additional expense, and in describing the work done reference is had to the final results rather than to the original specifications. The house has now been thoroughly rebuilt, and put in perfect order. The floor of the audience room was taken out and raised about two feet, thus giving so much additional height to the chapel which had always been dingy and uncomfortable. The class rooms

were changed to the front and so arranged that the whole could be thrown into one auditorium when desired. The number of side windows was nearly doubled, to afford more light. The floor was laid in hard pine, and the whole finished in good style; thus making it in all respects a most convenient and pleasant Sunday school room, and otherwise fitting it for the wants of the congregation.

The main audience room retains but little of its old appearance. The front of the galleries was cut down, the organ changed from the front to the rear of the pulpit, where a large addition was built for its reception, the position of the aisles changed, there being now three instead of two as before, and the entrance enlarged and improved. A rear entrance was made to the pulpit and singers' seats, which may also be of service in emergencies that are liable to arise.

The windows are all of cathedral and antique glass artistically combined by Mr. W. J. McPherson, the distinguished church artist, and they add much to the

attractiveness of the house. Reference has already been made to the memorial windows which are now in position but it may not be out of place to recapitulate. They were erected by the personal friends of the deceased and are in memory of Daniel Webb, Jeremiah Hazard, Sarah A. Cornell, Clark Weaver, Peter P. Remington, Elizabeth Sherman and Hannah Easton. These are names never to be forgotten in the history of the church, and it is well that the present generation is thus continually reminded of their virtues and their life-long services.

These changes, with the new pews, fresh carpets, and other improvements, make it a pleasant place of worship, and it is sincerely to be hoped that the glory of this latter house may even exceed that of the former.

The work of improvement has been done under the direction of the trustees, consisting of James L. Weaver, William R. Pitman, John C. Braman, William S. Bacheller, William P. Peckham, George H. Wilson and Benjamin F. Downing. The

building committee appointed by the board consisted of George H. Wilson, William P. Peckham and John C. Braman, who have given much time and care to the work.

The whole building is heated by steam, put in by the Newport Gas Company, whose officers and agents have done excellent work, and as the church now stands, it is believed, though still of moderate pretensions, to have about all of the practical modern improvements.



## XIV.

### THE PRESENT SITUATION.

---

IN 1879 S. J. Carroll was appointed to the charge of the second church, and is now in the third year of his pastorate. He was well received by his people, and though a stranger to most of them was able to enter at once upon his work. During the term of his ministry the church has been unusually prosperous, and much efficient work has been done in laying the foundations for still further successes. A healthful religious interest has pervaded the congregation from the first, and there have been numerous additions to the membership, which is now larger than at any previous time. The Sunday school, under the administration of A. C. Titus, who has served many years as superintendent, is large and flourishing; the finances are well maintained, and all departments of the church are in harmonious co-operation.

During this administration important changes have been made in the house of worship, and the audience room is greatly improved. The walls and ceiling, which were bare, have been appropriately frescoed; stained glass windows have been put in the place of the old and plain ones, and new carpets and furniture have been provided as was found desirable. An excellent organ was procured and placed at the right of the pulpit, where it proves of great value in connection with the service of praise. The total cost of these changes and improvements reached \$2,888, which, according to the custom of the parish, was fully paid at the time.

The church, after this thorough renovation, was formally re-opened on the 23d of January, 1881, with appropriate services. Dr. L. T. Townsend, of Boston, preached an able and eloquent sermon in the afternoon, and in the evening appropriate addresses were delivered by E. S. Stanley, of Providence, L. D. Davis, of this city, Dr. Townsend, A. Canoll, then of this

city, and the pastor, the entire occasion being one of great interest to the church and congregation.

The re-opening was followed by a gracious revival, the influence of which is still largely felt in the parish. According to the report made to the Conference at the close of the year, the total membership was two hundred and eight, with forty-one probationers. The Sunday school has thirty-nine officers and teachers, two hundred and thirty-seven scholars, with eight hundred and four volumes in the library.

At the session of the Conference held in Providence in April, 1882, D. A. Whedon, D. D., was appointed to the charge of the First Church. Through his former connection with the parish as pastor, and his recent service as Presiding Elder, he was thoroughly acquainted with the wants of the people, and prepared from the first to do effective service. As the repairs on the church edifice were not yet completed, the services were still held in the Central Baptist Church, and the same friendly relations were maintained between the two pastors and their congregations as before.



In an earlier chapter reference has been made to Miss Phebe Perry as one of the oldest and most active members of this church. On the 29th day of May in this year she passed to the church above. Though far advanced in years, she maintained her activity to the last, having been on the street the day previous to her death, thus dying with the harness on, and in full hope of a blessed immortality.

The Conference minutes show for this year two hundred and sixty-four members in full connection and four probationers. The statistics of the Sunday school are thirty-one officers and teachers, one hundred and seventy-six scholars, with six hundred and thirty-six volumes in the library.

The First Methodist Episcopal Church had now been in existence considerably more than three quarters of a century, and though started with an advertised lottery, had never held a church fair. For many years it has made no appeal for outside help in the support of any of its interests, but it was now thought proper to have a

sale of useful and fancy articles, after the manner of so many others, the proceeds to be applied to the purchase of carpets and cushions for the new church. It was therefore decided to hold a fair in Odd Fellows Hall, which should be conducted on strictly business principles. It was announced that articles offered for sale would be held at an honest valuation, in no case above the prices charged in the stores for similar goods; that no visitor should be urged to purchase; that there should be no games of chance, no guessing for prizes; in short, nothing out of the usual line of business. People wise in these matters shook their heads, and said such a fair would be a failure. But it was held, and the program was faithfully carried out. It was withal a pleasant occasion, and one whose social influences were greatly needed in the congregation. The outcome was a net profit of about eight hundred dollars, a sum sufficient for the purpose in view. The result was gratifying, as was also the demonstrated fact that a church fair is not necessarily a departure from moral and business like principles.

## XV.

### THE CHURCH IN MIDDLETOWN.

---

MIDDLETOWN is the suburb of Newport, and like the city itself possesses many features of peculiar interest. It is a town of large wealth, and yet without a hotel, store, postoffice, lawyer or physician. For all these the dependence of the people is on the city so near their doors.

It is evident that the history of Methodism in Newport would not be complete did it not include a reference to the young but vigorous church in this locality. The sketch which follows is mostly from the pen of James Mather, the present pastor :

The church edifice now belonging to and occupied by the First Methodist Episcopal Church in Middletown was built about the year 1847 by members of the Christian Baptist denomination as the result of some difference between them and the members

worshipping in what was known as the "Swamp Meeting House." Various efforts had been made to harmonize the differences, but without success. After a time the "Church at the Corners," as it was called, became vacant and stood unoccupied for two or three years.

Methodism had but few representatives in the town at this time, these few having their membership in the First Church in Newport. The ministers of that parish occasionally visited the town in the exercise of their pastoral duties towards the members of these families, and John Lovejoy preached several times in the unoccupied meeting house during his term of service. During the winter of 1855-6, Ormando Brooks, then pastor of the Thames Street Church, also preached with good effect, as the result of which the question of re-opening the church soon began to be agitated.

In the spring of 1856 the first class was organized by Dr. Frederick Upham, then pastor of the First Church, and during the same year regular services were com-

menced by J. F. Fogg, a local preacher, under the direction of the Presiding Elder. In April, 1857, the Conference which was held that year in Bristol appointed the first regular pastor to Middletown in the person of C. A. Merrill, now of the New England Conference. Mr. Merrill commenced his labors under discouraging circumstances so far as outward appearances were concerned; but putting his trust in God he went forward in his appointed work, and it was soon manifest to himself and others that the Head of the Church was with him, and that the time had come when Christianity in its Methodistic form had a mission in Middletown.

The church was duly organized in June, 1857, with four members, including the pastor's wife. Of these three are still living, namely, Truman B. Congdon, his wife, Mary M. Congdon, and Mrs. Merrill. The fourth, William G. Sherman, well known throughout the community, has passed over to the church triumphant. Twenty-five others joined on probation at the same time. The enterprise has been a

successful one from that beginning. Considering the paucity of the population, its proximity to Newport, and the fact that the church relations of many were already fixed in the city, it is evident that the expectations of the most earnest of its promoters must have been more than realized.

The church building has been twice enlarged and beautified. A good pipe organ was presented by the Sunday school with the assistance of a few friends outside, as a centenary gift, under the management of William Livesey, in the year 1866. The church has just celebrated the 25th anniversary of its organization with pleasant and profitable social services. From a paper read at that time it appears that the whole number of probationers received during the administration of Mr. Merrill was 91. The whole number of probationers entered on the records from the beginning is 242. The total membership that has appeared on the books as in full connection is 201. Of these 30 were received by letter, 60 have been removed by letter, 20 are returned as removed without letter

or withdrawn, 18 have died, and there remain in full 93 with fifteen on probation.

The Sunday school appears on the records for the first time in 1858, with 11 teachers, 65 scholars, and 300 volumes in the library. Its first superintendent, T. B. Congdon, is still at its head, working with the same self-sacrificing zeal and devotion that have distinguished him through all these years. It is still, though not large, in an interesting and efficient condition.

The Middletown Church has been marked by a large liberality, considering the financial ability of its members. Besides the expenditures in the improvements already referred to, they have built and paid for a good substantial parsonage of two stories, which is now in use. They have paid more than the average salary among churches of the same ability, and there has been generally a most united feeling between pastors and people.

The following are the names in their order of the several pastors :

■

1857-8—Charles A. Merrill.

1859-60—W. V. Morrison.

1861-2—W. Turkington.

1863-4—A. A. Wright.

1865—Carlos Banning.

1866-8—W. Livesey.

1869-70—Franklin Gavitt.

1871—N. W. Chase.

1872-3—Charles Hammond.

1874-6—Merrick Ransom.

1877-9—E. L. Hyde.

1880-1—J. O. Thompson.

1882—James Mather, the present incumbent.

The prospects of this rural parish are cheering. Before Mr. Thompson left, improvements on an extensive scale had been commenced in the vestry. It had been refloored and was in process of being painted, both walls and ceiling, in oil. Chairs have taken the place of the settees, making the room, with its newly-carpeted platform, cosy and inviting as well as convenient.

One of the early converts, after receiving a collegiate education, is now serving the denomination as an efficient minister, viz :



W. J. Smith, of Phœnix, R. I. His father, James M. Smith, has long been actively connected with the various interests of the church.

The members of the Quarterly Conference (1882) are as follows :

Stewards—T. B. Congdon, J. M. Smith, G. A. Brown, J. S. Ward, G. Whitman, A. A. Brown, W. T. Slocum, C. S. Peckham, F. A. Smith.

Treasurer—W. T. Slocum.

Trustees—G. A. Brown, J. M. Smith, C. S. Peckham, Benjamin Brown, John Spooner, A. H. Ward.

Class Leaders—T. B. Congdon, J. S. Ward, C. H. Congdon.



## XVI.

### HOMeward BOUND.

---

FOR a little more than six months the congregation of the First Church had met in the Central Baptist Church, and the relations of the two churches had continued of the most cordial and friendly character. The time had now come for separation. On the second day of July, 1882, the Rev. Dr. Whedon preached an able sermon and referred to the fact that on the next Sunday it was expected the congregation would return to its old home, which was now nearly in readiness for their coming. He was followed by Mr. L. D. Davis, who presented the following papers, which had been prepared by a committee appointed by the Quarterly Conference for the purpose:

"The members of the First Methodist Episcopal Church and congregation, when fire had partially destroyed their house of

worship, in December last, found the occasion one which was promptly and cheerfully improved by sister churches for a practical expression of Christian sympathy and brotherly love. No sooner were our own doors closed against us than were theirs opened for our admission. The Friends tendered us the use of their meeting house; the Second Baptist Church invited us to join with them, and offered ample accommodations; the Central Baptists bade us come and share their apartments; the Congregationalists assured us of a hearty welcome; the Thames-street Church, like a dutiful daughter, offered the old mother a home so long as she had need, and the Young Men's Christian Association placed their pleasant rooms at our disposal. These many expressions of good will, and the wealth of opportunities afforded us, proved an occasion of some embarrassment, for we could scarcely feel like declining overtures so cheerfully made; each of which covered our necessities. In making the selection we were not at all unmindful of the Christian courtesy of those whose

invitations we could not accept, and we take this occasion to publicly express our thanks to the pastors and members of those churches who thus came to our relief in the time of trial. We shall keep in mind the acts of those who proved themselves friends in need, and shall ever pray that the blessing of our common Father shall rest upon them, and that we may continue to enjoy that true fellowship that constitutes Christians one in Jesus Christ our Lord."

This paper was adopted by a rising vote of the congregation as expressive of their appreciation of the courtesies extended to them.

Mr. Davis then read the following from the same committee which, on motion of Darius Baker, was adopted and ordered communicated to Rev. Dr. Randolph and the Central Baptist Church :

"The First Methodist Episcopal Church of this city having been so injured by fire on the fifteenth of December last that a complete renovation was necessary to fit it again for use, various hospitalities were tendered us, and among them was the

---

prompt and generous invitation of the Central Baptist Church to hold our services in their house. This invitation was accepted; and from that time until this day we have freely used the privileges thus cordially given, with the Sabbath afternoon for our Sunday school and public worship, and a week evening for our prayer meeting. The work of repair is now so near completion that we are expecting our next gathering to be in our old home.

"This, then, is a fitting time for the acknowledgment that it is in all our hearts to make, and we, the members and congregation of the First Methodist Episcopal Church, do hereby express our sincere and grateful thanks to our brethren, the pastor, members and congregation of the Central Baptist Church of this city, both for the kindness of their invitation, and for the Christian courtesy and brotherly love they have shown us during the entire period of our occupancy of their house, which has been much longer, doubtless, than any of us anticipated.

"But, beyond all considerations of comfort and convenience to ourselves, do we rejoice in the opportunity thus furnished of showing to the world the real, substantial unity of the two churches in the one common Lord, and in the growth and strengthening of the bonds of a true, Christian brotherhood between them. We trust that this spirit may continue and increase; and we most devoutly pray that the blessing of our one Head may abide upon our brethren of the Central Baptist Church, building them up in all godliness and truth, and granting them abundant spiritual power and usefulness.

"Our church will, God willing, be reopened on Thursday next, and we most heartily invite the pastor, brethren and congregation of the Central Baptist Church to unite with us in the services of that day."

The Rev. Dr. Randolph, who was in the congregation, arose and made some remarks, expressive of the feeling of himself and his people toward their departing guests. From the first, he said, everything had been of the most pleasing character.

The two churches, without relinquishing any of their peculiarities, had acted in the most perfect accord, and with the sincerest Christian fellowship. He was thankful that they had come to know each other better, and he should pray for the continued prosperity of his Methodist brethren now returning to their accustomed place of worship.

Rev. Dr. Whedon spoke briefly but feelingly as to the uniform courtesy which had been extended during the time that the congregations had worshipped together. Had the pastor and people of the Central Church been of his own denomination they could not have shown more interest in the welfare of himself and his congregation. He again thanked them all for their brotherly kindness and true Christian charity.

And thus the two churches with the kindest regards for each other separated. While no attempt had been made to hold union meetings, the Baptists occupying the church in the morning and the Methodists in the afternoon, the two congregations had largely run together for the six months

since the fire, and the result proved a fitting exhibition of the essential oneness of the Christian life, and the sincerity of Christian experience.





## XVII.

### THE RE-OPENING SERVICE.

---

THE services connected with the re-opening proved to be of a very interesting character. There was quite an attendance from Providence, including several clergymen of that city and neighboring towns. At the afternoon service the house was well filled at an early hour, many being present also from other congregations of the city.

Among the clergymen present were Rev. Bishop E. G. Andrews, of Washington, D. C.; Dr. M. J. Talbot, presiding elder; Jonathan Cady, the oldest minister in the conference and a former pastor; John Lovejoy; Dr. James Porter, of Brooklyn, N. Y.; Dr. W. V. Morrison, W. T. Worth, H. B. Cady, Joseph Holinshead, Jesse Wagner, S. Leader, G. M. Hamlin, of Providence and vicinity;

J. B. Husted, of Watertown, Mass. ; James Mather, of Middletown ; Dr. Warren Randolph, H. J. Van Dyke, Jr., W. H. Thomas, H. N. Jeter, F. Rector, M. Van Horne, S. J. Carroll, and C. W. Wendte, all pastors in Newport.

The altar and pulpit were beautifully decorated with flowers, the new baptismal font being filled with choice specimens, the whole 'audience' room presenting a very inviting and attractive appearance. In the congregation were His Honor, Mayor Franklin, and many other of our leading citizens.

The services were opened with an organ voluntary by Mr. J. L. Frank and an anthem by the choir "And Many People ;" Dr. Randolph read the Scriptures, and Dr. Talbot offered prayer. The hymns following were sung by the whole congregation with good effect.

Bishop Andrews took his text from St. John's Gospel, iv., 24 :—"God is a Spirit." In proceeding he first sketched the circumstances under which Jesus made this declaration for the purpose of convincing his

single auditor of the great fundamental truth of Christianity. There can be no true worship without a belief of God as a spirit. Man must believe in the immaterial and unseen. No man lives who does not exercise this faith. The Master appears in his works. We look upon these beautiful windows, upon this renovated church, and see the whole in harmony, and evidently intended for certain uses. We do not see the hand that did the work nor the mind that planned it. And yet we *know* there was a designer and a workman, and not a single result was reached without the exercise of intelligent skill and power. We know it as fully and as indisputably as though we had been present and seen the work performed.

God is not matter ; he is mind, or, as the text has it, "spirit." He has neither body nor parts. Matter has its qualities, such as divisibility, form, gravity, etc., etc., but mind has none of these. It is independent of and above matter in its relations and qualities.

The Bishop then proceeded to discuss in a masterly manner the following questions :

1. How does God's spirituality stand related to other truths, of a material character?

2. How to our assurance of his existence?

3. How to our knowledge of his character?

4. How to our communion with him?

5. Nature of our worship?

At the close of the sermon Bishop Andrews, the congregation standing, offered a fervent prayer for the blessing of God upon the place and upon its ministers and people who should worship here during the years to come, and thus concluded the services of the day.

In the evening there was a large gathering. The services partook somewhat of the character of a reunion as the time was devoted to brief addresses by former pastors who had been invited to be present. The pastor, Dr. Whedon, conducted the devotional exercises and then introduced L. D. Davis as presiding officer for the evening. On assuming his position as such he gave a brief sketch of the history

of the church, calling attention to some of its more striking features, and then introduced the several speakers.

First among them was Dr. James Porter, now of New York, who was here to fill a vacancy in the pastorate fifty-two years before. The Doctor gave an amusing sketch of the old church as it appeared at that time and of his fear and trembling when called upon to ascend the high pulpit and face the large congregation which in those days filled the house. He had never been in the church since and his return at this time was an occasion of peculiar interest.

The name next introduced was that of Dr. R. M. Hatfield, of Chicago, who also received his first appointment to this charge. He was ordained in this church by Bishop Hedding. Unable himself to be present he wrote the following letter which was read by Mr. B. F. Thurston :

DR. D. A. WHEDON,

Dear Brother :—The invitation from yourself and the other members of the Committee to attend the re-opening of your church has been received. I am too far from Newport to accept the invitation, but take it kindly that you thought of me in this connection. I

wish very much that I could be with you and take some part in the exercises of the joyful occasion. My thoughts turn back this morning to the time when I first visited Newport. It is a good many years since, so many, that I am no longer a young man. At the time to which I refer Joel Knight was pastor of the church and in the midst of a glorious revival of religion. He labored with wonderful energy and perseverance and God crowned his labors with wonderful results. Some of the fruits of that revival must remain with you until this day. The "lay preacher" from Pawtucket helped what he could for a few days and his efforts were at least endured by the warm hearted pastor and his flock. At the next session of the Providence Conference Brother Knight insisted that I should succeed him as pastor of the Newport church and the Bishop and Presiding Elder assented to the arrangement. I went to the responsible position taking my "girl wife" with me. I was green, inexperienced and poorly qualified for the place. I should have failed utterly but for the cordial manner in which the church received and sustained me. My heart grows warm and tender as I think of the good men and "elect ladies" who welcomed me and mine so cordially, and who manifested a parental interest in our welfare. I cannot write down a list of half of their number, but their names are in the Book of Life. There were the Mumfords, the Remingtons, the Shermans, the Burdicks, and John Allan, whose face shone while he sung, and Hannah Easton, a very Dorcas in practical benevolence, and thoughtful Sarah A. Cornell and Martha Peckham. Some of these remain until this present time, but the greater part are fallen asleep.

---

Asleep in Jesus, blessed sleep  
From which none ever wake to weep.

We are following hard after them and must soon be gathered with the silent majority. Excuse the hurried manner in which this scrawl is written, and extend to all the friends of your church my hearty congratulations and best wishes for their future prosperity. Should I ever chance to be in Newport for a Sabbath I shall hope to have an opportunity to fill or at least rattle around in the pulpit of the renewed old church once more.

Truly, fraternally yours,

R. M. HATFIELD.

After joining in hearty congregational singing, brief and pertinent addresses were made by J. B. Husted, John Lovejoy, M. J. Talbot, D. A. Whedon and George M. Hamlin. Each of the speakers referred to the former days, and gave some interesting reminiscences which were both amusing and instructive. All present felt highly favored to hear again from the former pastors and there were many regrets that the absent ones were unable to be present.

This service was concluded by the reading of the following letter from E. M. Smith, one of the recent pastors :

---

WEST EATON, N. Y., July 4, 1882.

REV. D. A. WHEDON, D. D.,

Dear Brother :—As I have intimated to you before, I am obliged to deny myself the very great pleasure of being with you on the 6th inst. My work is such that I cannot come east until later. The occasion, I know, would be much enjoyed by me, though I should be able to add very little to its interest. I can scarcely hope that the good people of Newport have one half as pleasant recollections of my pastorate there as are cherished by myself and family. With us Newport is, as yet, paradise.

My pastorate there was comparatively uneventful. The first year, however, was characterized by a gracious revival, by which more than fifty souls were added to the church, some of whom I trust still remain and are faithful and useful members. Some, also, of the converts of that winter sleep in Jesus.

While I was their pastor, the church lost the services of some of its oldest and most honored members. Prominent among them was Jeremiah Hazard, whose end was worthy of his life, and Benjamin Mumford who, although his death did not occur until later, was confined to his home during the last of my pastorate and never again left it. One of the last letters ever penned by Brother Mumford, if not *the* last, was written to myself, and received by me while in London. It was full of tender interest and devout thanksgiving for my escape from the perils of the sea. I thought I could discern, in that letter, unmistakable evidence that the servant of Christ was fast being made perfect in that holiness without which no man shall see the Lord.



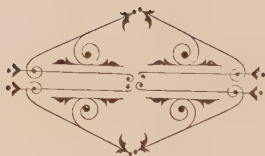
I cannot let this occasion pass without adding, in gratitude, a word of praise to the many which other pastors will speak in honor of Mrs. Kate Stevens, so recently departed. Some of my best lessons in religion were learned at her side.

Please express to the people my regrets at being absent, and my congratulations over the successful completion of their work of repair; and may an era of new spiritual prosperity now open before them.

Sincerely,

E. M. SMITH.





## XVIII.

### THE CHURCH OFFICIARY—1882.

---

#### PRESIDING ELDER.

Micah J. Talbot, D. D.

#### FIRST CHURCH.

##### SUCCESSIVE PASTORS.

Reuben Hubbard,	1805	Richard Livesey,	1846
Samuel Merwin,	1807	Barth'w Otheman,	1848
Daniel Webb,	1809	Asa U. Swinerton,	1850
Benj. F. Lambert,	1811	John B. Husted,	1852
Daniel Webb,	1814	John Lovejoy,	1853
Enoch Mudge,	1825	Frederick Upham,	1855
Samuel Norris,	1827	Micah J. Talbot,	1857
James Porter,	1829	John B. Husted,	1858
Thomas W. Tucker,	1830	Henry S. White,	1859
Asa Kent,	1832	Charles H. Titus,	1861
John Lord,	1834	Lucius D. Davis,	1863
Louis Janson,	1835	Daniel A. Whedon,	1866
Thomas Ely,	1836	George M. Hamlen,	1868
Jonathan Cady,	1837	Edwin S. Stanley,	1869
Isaac Stoddard,	1838	Dudley P. Leavitt,	1871
Franklin Gavitt,	1840	William F. Whitcher,	1874
Joel Knight,	1842	Edgar M. Smith,	1877
Robert M. Hatfield,	1843	Angelo Canoll,	1880
Elisha B Bradford,	1845	Daniel A. Whedon,	1882

## PASTOR.

Daniel A. Whedon, D. D.

## LEADERS.

William S. Bacheller,	Edward D. Jones, Jr.
Nathan G. Kenyon,	Jere. W. Horton,
George H. Lovejoy.	

## STEWARDS.

William R. Pitman,	John C. Braman,
Lucius D. Davis,	Theophilus T. Pitman,
Jere. W. Horton,	Thomas P. Peckham,
Thomas W. Freeborne,	Darius Baker,
Henry C. Bacheller.	

## TRUSTEES.

John C. Braman,	William P. Peckham,
John C. Stoddard,	Benjamin F. Downing,
George H. Wilson,	William L. Tilley,
Parker H. Thurston,	George H. Kelley,
William S. Bailey.	

## TREASURER.

Jere. W. Horton.

## THE THAMES-STREET CHURCH.

## SUCCESSIVE PASTORS.

Ornando N. Brooks, 1855	Asa N. Bodfish, 1868
Edward A. Lyon, 1858	Benjamin A. Chase, 1870
Wm. H. Richards, 1860	Edwin F. Jones, 1872
William Livesey, 1862	Shadrach Leader, 1874
Edward A. Lyon, 1864	William T. Harlow, 1876
Frederick Upham, 1866	Oliver H. Fernald, 1878
Samuel J. Carroll, 1880.	

\*There is an error of one year in the date of appointment in the body of this work which is corrected in this list.

## PASTOR.

Samuel J. Carroll.

## LEADERS.

Alexis M. Slocum,	Frank Sylvia,
Samuel Haddock,	Charles H. Seatle,
George Stanhope,	William H. Crandall,
William J. Holt,	Lewis Skinner,
John H. Carl,	Thomas S. Bowler,
Thomas Martland.	

## STEWARDS.

Isaac W. Sherman,	William J. Holt,
Edward Young,	Seth Swinburne,
Augustin C. Titus,	John B. Mason,
Charles S. Sherman,	T. Fred. Kaull,
John J. Carry.	

## TRUSTEES.

Isaac W. Sherman,	William J. Holt,
Edward Young,	Seth Swinburne,
Augustin C. Titus,	William B. Champlin,
John Gilpin,	George Stanhope.

## TREASURER.

T. Fred. Kaull.













R.Rm.  
BY1670  
.N548D26  
1882

Davis.  
History of the  
Methodist Episcopal  
Church.

FE 19 '69

DATE	ISSUED TO

FE 19 '69

**GARRETT THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY  
LIBRARY  
EVANSTON, ILLINOIS**



222-ABA-618

